The Transportation System in Brief

In 2005, the population of the nine-county Bay Area grew nearly 1 percent to almost 7.1 million. These residents were on the go, taking more than 21 million trips on an average weekday, or about three trips per person each day in order to get to work, school, shopping or other activities. More than 84 percent of all trips were by automobile. Walking and biking were the next most common ways to get around (10 percent of all trips); naturally, trips made by walking and biking tend to be shorter distances. About 6 percent of all trips were by public transit, and the majority of these trips occurred during commute hours. Over the course of the year, some 477 million transit trips were taken, and more than 57 billion miles were logged on the region's freeways, highways, expressways, and local streets and roads (see table below).

Bay Area residents' appetite for travel increased in 2005, reflecting a strengthening regional economy. Total vehicle miles driven rose by 2 percent. Regional employment increased in 2005, ending a four-year slide. The Bay Area's population continues to grow, nudging upward by 3 percent since 2001. And while the number of transit trips increased by 2 million, reversing three years of declining ridership, the total number of trips is still 10 percent below 2001 figures.

Long-term forecasts project a continuing rebound in both population and employment around the Bay Area. By 2030, the region's population is expected to grow to 8.8 million people, and employment will expand to 5.2 million jobs. MTC predicts the number of trips will grow to 28.5 million each day, increasing wear-and-tear and making other demands on Bay Area roads and transit. MTC's long-range transportation investment strategy for the region, adopted in 2005 as the *Transportation 2030 Plan,* addresses these growing needs by devoting 80 percent of the $118 billion in anticipated revenues over the 25-year planning horizon to basic maintenance needs and ongoing operations. Yet even this level of investment is not sufficient to fully address the Bay Area transportation network's projected maintenance needs. To meet increased travel demands, the *Transportation 2030 Plan* calls for 4 percent of the funds to be spent on low-cost operational improvements that squeeze more efficiency out of the

Population, Employment and Travel in the Bay Area, 2001–2005

	In Thousands					Percent Change	
	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2004–2005	2001–2005
Residents	6,917	6,956	6,994	7,064	7,093	+1%	+3%
Jobs	3,506	3,322	3,220	3,202	3,228	+1%	–8%
Vehicle Miles Driven	54,510,600	56,895,800	59,947,000	56,877,200	57,751,300	+2%	+6%
Transit Trips	533,038	515,556	478,587	475,016	477,240	+<1%	–10%

Sources: California Employment Development Department, California Department of Finance, Caltrans, Metropolitan Transportation Commission

Transit trips data is compiled by fiscal year, e.g., data listed for 2004 represents July 1, 2003–June 30, 2004.
Transit ridership data for fiscal year 2004-05 is provisional.

transportation system, and the remaining 16 percent on strategic expansion of the region's transit and roadway network.

California voters in November 2006 approved nearly $20 billion in bonds to improve transportation infrastructure statewide. Over the next decade, these bonds are expected to yield as much as $4.2 billion to $4.5 billion for transportation improvements around the Bay Area. Projects will encompass all modes of travel — ranging from upgrades to the regional highway network, to intercity rail improvements, to investments in the region's ports and freight infrastructure.

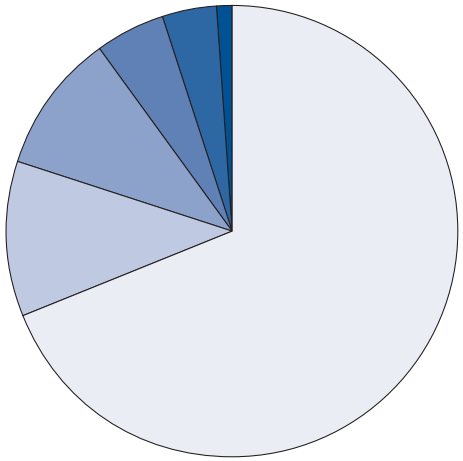
The Freeway System and State Highway System

The 57 billion miles of travel logged in 2005 by cars, trucks, buses and motorcycles on the Bay Area's roads and highways include more than 30 billion miles along the region's 620-mile freeway network. The freeway system includes 340 miles of "diamond lanes" that allow people in carpools, vanpools and buses to bypass congestion during peak commute hours. In 2005, carpool lanes carried 16 percent of the vehicles and 30 percent of the people in the peak commute hour on freeway segments with carpool lanes. This is a slight increase from 2004, when carpool lanes carried 29 percent of people in the peak commute hour, even though the percentage of vehicles driving in the carpool lanes remained flat at 16 percent.

A good portion of the region's freeway system is equipped with high-tech devices designed to increase freeway efficiency and better serve travelers. More than 450 miles of freeway are equipped with roadway sensors and video cameras that can detect slowdowns. Travelers also can check for freeway delays throughout the region and get point-to-point driving times by calling 511 or visiting the 511.org Web site. In addition, the roving tow trucks of the Freeway Service Patrol cruised along some 441 miles of the most congested freeways and expressways during the first six months of 2005, increasing to 458 miles for the second half of the year, helping motorists with car trouble, removing debris or quickly clearing accidents.

The region's freeway system is supplemented by approximately 800 miles of state highways. Most of these state-owned roadways are the major thoroughfares linking communities in the outer suburban and rural parts of the

How Bay Area Workers Commuted, 2005

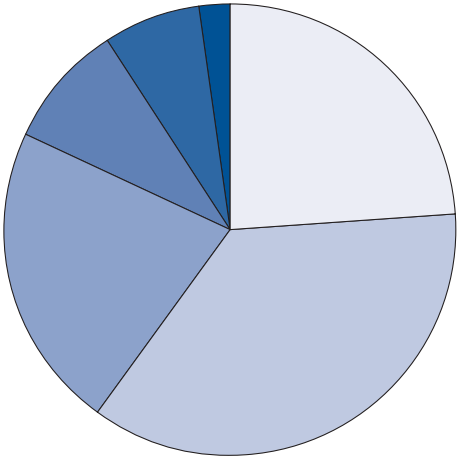


Drove Alone	**69%**
Carpooled	**11%**
Public Transportation	**10%**
Worked at Home	**5%**
Walked or Bicycled	**4%**
Other Means*	**1%**

Source: 2005 American Community Survey (U.S. Census Bureau)

*"Other Means" includes motorcycle and taxi.

Bay Area Commute Times, 2005: The Long and Short of It



0 to 14 minutes	**24%**
15 to 29 minutes	**36%**
30 to 44 minutes	**22%**
45 to 59 minutes	**9%**
60 to 89 minutes	**7%**
90 minutes or more	**2%**

Source: 2005 American Community Survey (U.S. Census Bureau)

Average (one-way) commute time for Bay Area workers in 2005: 26.9 minutes

Bay Area. These highways include State Routes 12, 29 and 37 in the North Bay, State Route 4 in eastern Contra Costa County, State Route 1 along the San Mateo County coastline, and State Route 152 in southern Santa Clara County. Some state highways run through the heart of urban areas and are indistinguishable to most travelers from locally owned urban roadways. Such roads include El Camino Real from San Jose to San Francisco (State Route 82) and San Pablo Avenue (State Route 123) from Oakland to Hercules in the East Bay.

Toll Bridges

Seven state-owned toll bridges and the Golden Gate Bridge grace the San Francisco Bay. In 2005, nearly 132 million vehicles crossed the seven state-owned toll bridges in the Bay Area, generating approximately $380 million in total toll revenues. While the majority of tolls are paid with cash, a growing number of travelers are using the FasTrak® electronic toll collection system, which has been in place on all transbay bridges since 2000. In 2005, the number of FasTrak® transactions passed 40 million.

The Local Roadway Network

Bay Area cities and counties own and maintain more than 19,000 centerline miles of local roadways, which must balance the needs of bicyclists and pedestrians as well as those traveling by buses and private automobiles. About half of the more than 7,000 traffic signals on the region's local roadway system are synchronized to reduce the time people spend waiting at red lights during weekday peak travel periods. The timing for about one-third of these signals recently has been updated to accommodate current traffic volumes, resulting in average reductions of 13 percent in travel time, 13 percent in fuel consumption, and 7 percent in mobile source emissions for the nearly 140 corridors that were retimed. In some major bus corridors, signals are programmed to give preferential treatment to buses that are running late so they can get back on schedule.

The Public Transit System

In fiscal year 2004-05, some two dozen Bay Area transit operators provided 186 million vehicle miles of

service and carried nearly 477 million passengers. Although the number of passengers rose, the split between types of transit service used stayed the same in fiscal year 2004-05. Buses continue to carry the majority of transit riders, transporting nearly two-thirds of all passengers while providing just under half of all service miles. The remaining third are carried on BART, commuter rail, light rail, ferries, and door-to-door vans and taxis that serve elderly and disabled riders (called paratransit service).

The Bay Area's transit operators were early leaders in making the region's buses, trains, ferries and light-rail vehicles accessible to persons with disabilities. Today, more than 90 percent of the region's buses and 95 percent of transit centers and rail stations are accessible to persons using wheelchairs

In an effort to improve transit efficiency and ease transferring between systems, MTC recently conducted a regional Transit Connectivity Study. This study of 21 Bay Area transit centers plus the region's three major airports identified a need to increase the amount, quality and consistency of information available to transit users at these sites. Among other things, the study recommended expanding the use of real-time signage and other helpful wayfinding aids, and these recommendations will be implemented at many transit centers over the next few years.

Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities

The ability of residents to get around safely on foot or by bicycle is increasingly recognized as an essential factor in a neighborhood's quality of life. Also, there is a growing recognition that walking and cycling can help to promote healthier lifestyles and combat health conditions associated with decreasing levels of physical activity, such as obesity and diabetes.

The network used by bicyclists and pedestrians is ubiquitous. It includes the entire local roadway system, as well as sidewalks and some dedicated pathways. In addition, most buses and trains now accommodate bicycles. Bicycles and pedestrians are excluded from most freeways for reasons of safety, but access is provided on Bay Area toll bridges, either through bicycle lanes, special vans or transit service connections. Still, there are numerous locations without sidewalks or bicycle lanes, forcing bicyclists and pedestrians to share a lane with traffic. The safety of pedestrians and cyclists is a topic of increasing concern, and programs such as Safe Routes to School and other safety initiatives are being implemented by jurisdictions around the region.

Regionwide, bicycling accounts for 1 percent of all trips, and walking accounts for about 9 percent. However, for trips to school, bicycling accounts for about 4 percent of trips and walking for more than 20 percent.

Airports and Seaports

The Bay Area boasts three international airports (San Francisco, Oakland and San Jose) and four major seaports (Oakland, San Francisco, Redwood City and Richmond). The region's airports and seaports are gateways to the rest of the country and the world for tourism, business travel and trade. The Port of Oakland is the fourth-largest seaport in the nation in terms of container traffic and one of the only major U.S. ports that exports more than it imports. The Port of Oakland serves as the principal route for exports from the Central Valley as well as an entryway for goods from the Pacific Rim. The Port of Richmond is a major entryway for gasoline and oil products. All told, the Bay Area's airports and seaports handle nearly 58 million passengers, 1.5 million tons of air cargo, 2.3 million containers and 33 million tons of bulk cargo a year.